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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, June 4, 2012, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2012

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pause now in Your presence, and acknowledge our dependence on You.

We ask Your blessing upon the men and women of this, the people's House. Keep them aware of Your presence as they face the tasks of this day, that no burden be too heavy, no duty too difficult, and no work too wearisome.

Help them, and indeed, help us all, to obey Your law, to do Your will, and to walk in Your way. Grant that they might be good in thought, gracious in word, generous in deed, and great in spirit.

Make this a glorious day in which all are glad to be alive, eager to work, and ready to serve You, our great Nation, and all our fellow brothers and sisters.

May all that is done this day be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COURTNEY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute requests on each side of the aisle.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

(Mr. WELCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, the other day, I received a letter from a constituent, Lana Kunkel. Like many Vermonters, she is concerned about the doubling of Stafford student loan interest rates scheduled for July 1.

This is very personal for her. She used the Stafford loan to get a good education and start a career as a nurse. She is now a contributing member of the community. She is also the granddaughter of former U.S. Vermont Representative and Senator Bob Stafford, for whom the Stafford student loan program is named. Here is what she had to say about her grandfather:

I know my grandfather's intention for these loans was accessibility and not profit.

I understand that times are tough and people are looking everywhere, but this is just not right. My grandfather was known as a gentle giant, but if he were alive today, I think he would oppose this with force.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Stafford knew that a higher education was the clearest path to the middle class in this country—and he was a good Republican. We should not let the interest rates double. There is no justification for having these interest rates go from 3.4 to 6.8 percent. We have 30 days to act.

THE FOREST PRODUCTS FAIRNESS ACT OF 2012

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the USDA Biobased Markets program was created to provide new markets for farm commodities and to encourage consumers to purchase environmentally friendly biobased products. Unfortunately, under the current law, most forest products are excluded from both the Federal procurement preference and the market label of the USDA Biobased Markets program. For instance, bamboo plywood is already eligible for the BioPreferred label and is used as a "green" alternative for hardwood flooring or lumber.

The Forest Products Fairness Act of 2012 modifies the definition of "biobased product" to clarify that forest products should be included in the Biobased Markets program if they

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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